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AUTHOR Andrews, Jerrilyn V.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

In 1977 the Dallas Independent School District devised a 5-year state-mandated improvement plan for increasing student test scores in priority goal areas. This paper describes the planning process as it evolved, the problems faced by large districts, and the 5-year student achievement results. The original plan contained eight priority goal areas, accompanied by goal indicators. These goals, as well as sample formats for learning objectives, were placed in accountability notebooks and given to 400 building administrators. In 1978-79, 177 improvement plans were submitted, only 63 of which were deemed adequate. Goal areas were reduced the following year and planning guidelines revised. Submitted plans showed a marked improvement. 1980-81 represented a major step forward. Guidelines became more specific, and monitoring greatly expanded. By the end of year 4, far fewer schools required plan implementation assistance. 1982-83 saw major revisions, among which were prototypic school improvement plans with specific instructional strategies. Project problems ranged from a lack of personnel commitment to test and scoring changes. Finally, student achievement was determined by comparing earliest test results with 1982-83 results and district objectives, the latter showing gains at every level. (KS)

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Achievement Results from Five Years of Mandated School Improvement Planing

Jerrilyn V. Andrews, Deberie Gomez Adkins, and Robert P. Grobe

Dallas Independent School District

In 1977 the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) developed a five-year school improvement plan to comply with the Texas Education Agency's Principles, Standards, and Procedures for the Accreditation of School Districts. This plan included a set of student achievement goal areas that were established after a district-wide needs assessment. The priority areas in which goals were developed include: (a) functional literacy, (b) mathematics, (c) reading, and (d) basic language arts. Annually, the DISD set improvement objectives for each goal area based on system-wide test results; these objectives were stated in terms of specific, targeted increases in the percentage of students scoring at or above a given level. Each school conducted a local needs assessment, set student achievement objectives in each goal area, and developed instructional strategies to address each goal area. The 1982-83 school year marked the end of the first five-year cycle of school improvement planning.

When DISD began its school improvement planning process, the school district had experienced several years of declining student test scores. Less than half of DISD students were scoring above the 50th %ile on national norms in reading, mathematics, and language arts in any grade and, in many cases, less than 25% of the students were scoring above the 50th %ile. Clearly DISD had a real problem that required a concentrated attack.

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The purposes of this paper are to (1) describe the school improvement planning process as it has evolved in DISD, (2) describe problems (and solutions) that face district-wide school improvement planning efforts in large districts, and (3) present student achievement results for the five-year period.

This paper will describe the process the Dallas public schools used to turn a state mandate into a successful school improvement project. Unlike many school improvement projects, schools neither voluntered nor were selected on specific criteria to participate; all DISD schools were required to participate. This meant that approximately 400 building administrators and 7,000 teachers needed to understand the process and actively support it. A second unique feature of the project was the small size of the central staff specifically assigned to it. Between two and five people have been assigned yearly. Other staff did bear important responsibilities for assisting with the school improvement project, but it was only one of their many responsibilities. Over the five years the scope, content, and specificity of the school improvement plans underwent marked changes. The paper will describe the assumptions that were initially made and how practice modified them.

The School Improvement Planning Process

The original DISD Five-Year Plan for TEA Accreditation contained eight priority goal areas: functional literacy, mathematics (K-8), mathematics (9-12), reading (K-12), basic language arts skills, science -- organizing and generalizing from data, science -- problem-solving techniques, and social studies - citizenship. Each of the goals was accompanied by one or more goal indicators telling exactly how students

would demonstrate improvement. In June 1978 a School Planning and Accountability notebook was given to each building administrator. The notebook contained the DISD goals, goal indicators and student achievement objectives for the first year of the five-year cycle. Data and instructions were provided so that each school could complete a local building needs assessment. The notebooks also included sample formats for schools to use for their local objectives and for the strategies the schools would use to produce the specified student learning outcomes.

One hundred seventy-seven school improvement plans were submitted in year one. The plans were reviewed and placed in one of four categories. Of the 177 plans, 63 (35%) were categorized in one of the top two categories; these were called adequate. The strategies in the "adequate" plans were often just a list of materials or programs in use in the school.

Feedback indicated that the School Planning and Accountability notebook was geared to high schools almost to the exclusion of elementary schools and, as a result, more high school plans were acceptable. Instructions lacked clarity so principals tried to "fill up the space provided." Few central staff really understood the process thus schools received little help. Fifty schools that had acceptable plans were monitored. In 22 there was evidence that the plan was being implemented. In many of the other 28, it was clear that the administrator(s) had written the plan and no one else in the school was familiar with it.

The second year of the five-year cycle saw the number of goal areas reduced to four: (a) functional literacy, (b) mathematics, (c) reading, and (d) basic language arts. The other four were folded into one of those remaining. This decision was based on the availability of objective measures of student achievement and the apparent cumbersomeness of dealing with eight "priority" goal areas. The guidelines for school improvement planning were also revised based on the first year's experience.

The majority of school improvement plans were submitted in early October; the remainder came in in mid-December. Early plans were reviewed by a subdistrict administrator, a Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) person, and a Research and Evaluation (R&E) representative. Later ones were reviewed only by R&E personnel. The criteria for plan review included (a) correct completion of the needs assessment (b) satisfactory statement of the school improvement objectives for all four goal areas, (c) appropriateness of strategies for each goal area along with documentation and time frames. Of the 185 plans, 135 (73%) were judged acceptable. It must be emphasized here that little attempt was made to judge the quality of the strategies. The only strategies that were totally rejected were those that stated an outcome rather than a process. Schools whose plans were not acceptable were given a period of time to revise and resubmit; the last plans were accepted in March.

The overall quality of the plans for 1979-80 showed significant improvement over 1978-79 plans. The quality still ranged, however, from very poor to excellent. The plans that generally captured the spirit and

intent of the school improvement process were the result of an entire faculty effort to develop specific instructional strategies in areas where weaknesses existed. The number of acceptable plans was apparently affected by the number of principals who were new to a school and by newly developed local planning teams who did not receive sufficient assistance. Several schools that submitted adequate plans in 1978-79 failed to do so in 1979-80. It was verified that many schools who initially had unacceptable plans had assigned a new person to lead the plan development effort.

Principals were surveyed to see what problems they had encountered in developing their plans. The most often mentioned factor was lack of time for planning. Additional factors included inadequate planning skills, problems in interpretating data, lack of understanding of the plan, organizational difficulties, difficulty in establishing priorities, lack of personnel for assistance, problems with format, lack of correlation among programs, and problems with terminology.

Again only 50 schools, all with acceptable plans, were monitored. In 46 there was clear, abundant evidence that the school improvement plan was being implemented. This was a decided improvement over year 1 but still only schools with initially acceptable plans were monitored.

Year 3 marked a major step forward. The general superintendent made it very clear to all principals during their beginning-of-year staff development that the development and implementation of the school improvement plan was high priority. Some subdistricts took a more active

leadership role. Schools requested and received far more assistance than in the past; 92% of DISD schools received at least one documented instance of assistance.

The guidelines had been revised again to be more specific. They included a few examples of strategies taken from prior year's plans. Some subdistrict administrators found these strategies acceptable but others did not. For the first time some of the instructional leaders in DISD became actively involved in the school improvement plan effort. The result was school improvement plans that varied widely with respect to strategies; some were simply lists of materials while others moved in the direction of describing an instructional process that would be used to improve student achievement in priority areas. Some plans continued to be long lists of "all we do" while others became short, specific statements of instructional processes that would go beyond those generally in use.

Subdistrict administrators coordinated plan development and review. If a plan needed major revision, an instructional specialist was generally assigned to assist the school. By October 30 most schools had acceptable plans.

The monitoring effort was greatly expanded. During years 1 and 2 R&E staff had monitored 50 schools per year. During year 3 subdistrict administrators and C&I personnel joined the effort. Each school was monitored twice by at least two people. Many problems were uncovered as a result of these monitoring visits but the overall report was positive. Teachers <u>were</u> familiar with the school improvement plan. Schools <u>were</u> implementing their plans.

Year 4 began with revised and more specific guidelines. Examples of strategies became more specific and focused. The process used to teach an area like solving word problems was emphasized. Some subdistricts conducted extensive staff development sessions for principals during which the principals completed their local needs assessments and did a first draft of strategies. That year 95% of DISD schools received help with their school improvement plans. Assistance most often involved understanding test data, helping develop strategies and reviewing draft plans.

The general superintendent continued to emphasize the importance of school improvement planning. Subdistrict administrators and R&E personnel remained highly involved in the entire process; the involvement of C&I personnel was less consistent. Subdistricts coordinated plan review and provided or arranged for others to provide help to schools whose plans were unacceptable. Plans for implementing a guidance system (7-12) and Title IX plans were tacked onto school improvement plans that year. The additional components created problems and were dropped after that year. Since they were not instructional components, they were perceived to be diluting the school improvement plan effort.

Over 5,500 classrooms were monitored during two visits to each school. Subdistrict administrators, C&I personnel and R&E personnel again did the monitoring. After the fall visits approximately half the schools were judged to need some assistance with the implementation of their school improvement plans. By the end of the spring visits far fewer schools were in need of help. Again problems were identified as a result of monitoring and action was taken.

The fifth and final year of DISD's first TFA accreditation cycle brought some major revisions with it. During the spring of 1982 the Department of Curriculum and Instruction spearheaded the development of prototypic school improvement plans for elementary, middle, and high schools. These prototypic plans included several instructional strategies that might be used to improve achievement in each goal area. The development, dissemination, and discussion of these prototypic plans largely resolved the confusion noted earlier concerning what constituted an instructional strategy. Schools were to have no more than three strategies per goal area. Each strategy would spell out sequential steps in the teaching process.

Prior to the July 1982 DISD administrator's work conference, a sizeable group, consisting primarily of school principals, was given training on use of achievement data and the prototypic plan in the development of their own school improvement plans. This training was provided by staff from C&I, R&E, and one principal. At the July 1982 work conference, this trained group conducted workshops for their peers. In the course of these workshops, each principal received a school improvement planning notebook that included excerpts from the Board of Education policies, a list of factors underlying an effective instructional program, prototypic expectations for students and staff, the school's 1981-82 demographic and achievement data, a prototypic school improvement plan, a collection of instructional strategies in addition to those in the prototypic plan, sample monitoring forms, and blank forms needed for setting achievement objectives and writing

strategies. During the workshop on school improvement planning, principals were supposed to complete the entire needs assessment section of their school improvement plans.

After the work conference, subdistrict meetings were held at which principals received a detailed skills analysis for their Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) or Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) scores and their Campus Achievement Report for School Improvement Planning (CARSIP) to be used in setting their 1982-83 achievement objectives. Subdistrict workshops were held for school administrators to insure that school improvement plans were underway before teachers arrived.

Approved school improvement plans were due in the General Superintendent's office on October 15, 1982. Subdistrict administrators were allowed to set their own deadlines for completion of each of the required steps leading to the completed plan. These steps included having a conference at which school and subdistrict administrators agreed upon student achievement objectives, having plans submitted to the appropriate subdistrict administrator, and having the plans reviewed, evaluated, and approved. Once a school's plan had been approved, the school was to begin immediate implementation.

The addition of the prototypic school improvement plan made a big difference in school plans. Some schools simply adopted the prototype but the more creative ones used it for ideas. Providing a full-blown, detailed model made the expectations much clearer.

Thus over the five years DISD went from telling principals what they needed to include in their school improvement plan and assuming they would know how to develop and/or lead their faculties to develop the needed pieces to giving principals a complete prototype which they could

follow or adopt. The strategies in the prototype were edited versions of some from real school plans. This effectively allowed schools with weaker plans to borrow ideas from stronger ones. Principals and teachers found this much easier to deal with than the more open-ended instructions provided in earlier years.

Problems with District-wide School Improvement Efforts

Several sizable problems have been encountered during DISD's five years of mandated school improvement planning. Some of these problems would occur to the same degree in a voluntary setting. Others are/were big problems because all schools must participate in the school improvement effort. Each problem along with any solutions we have found will be discussed.

A major problem during the early years was getting administrators, principals, and teachers committed to the process. In a voluntary setting usually the principal is committed initially and he/she gets the teachers enthused. In DISD all schools were ordered to participate. Many administrators and principals viewed the school improvement planning process as "paperwork." They filled out the forms and that was it. Trying to convince principals that school improvement planning could result in many beneficial changes was not easy. The event that sparked greater committment on the part of subdistrict administrators and principals occurred at the beginning of year 3. At the opening-of-school administrators' work conference, the superintendent told everyone that school improvement plans would be done, submitted to his office,

monitored, and reported to him. He made it clear that he considered it extremely important. His open, public announcement of expectations sparked great interest where little had been.

A second problem that would probably occur in any large school district involved getting departments to work together and speak the same language. The structure of DISD has principals reporting to subdistrict administrators, C&I personnel reporting to a second administrator, and R&E staff reporting to yet another administrator. Until one reaches the general superintendent, the people who must work together to make school improvement planning work never report to the same person. A number of specific problems arise as a result. First priorities are different. School improvement planning is a major responsibility for a few (3) people in R&E, one of many major responsibilities for principals and subdistrict administrators, and often seen as a minor responsibility to many people in C&I. Second, participants must be careful not to step on others departments' toes. For example, R&E staff must be careful what we say about the quality of instructional strategies since technically that is not our area of expertise. Third, it is often difficult to get decisions made since no one person has authority over the process. There is no central staff person charged with making this work. This problem is now dealt with informally for the most part. Often when a major decision has to be made, such as revising the prototype, someone will suggest to the deputy superintendent that he appoint a committee. He usually honors the request and a committee is formed with the authority to make certain specific decisions. While this is not as efficient as

having one person with the responsibility and the authority, it does get the job done. Fourth, with so many people from different departments involved, it is difficult to develop a common language. The state mandate calls for the District to adopt "goals" and "goal indicators" for the five-year cycle; an example of a goal might be mathematics or citizenship. The state mandate also requires the District to set five-year and annual "objectives"; these are projected increases in test scores. What the DISD five-year plan calls objectives are known in the District as objectives, goals, and projections; this terminology problem is still with us. We try to combat it by (a) trying to make all written documents consistent, (b) consistently using terms ourselves, and (c) correcting misuses whenever possible. However, when the superintendent gets the terms mixed up, we just grin and bear it!

A problem that can occur in any school district but that will be bigger in a large district involves changes in the assignments of principals or other administrators. Subdistrict administrators often have particular things they like to see/require in school improvement plans. When administrators are moved to other areas, the principals need to adjust to the new administrator's expectations. Unfortunately, most subdistrict administrators assume that they all require the same things. They tend to forget the day that they decided a particular thing would have to be in all plans. The second change that creates problems involves new principals. Those who are moved from another school are familiar with the process but usually need to learn about their new school. Some school plans look strange unless one knows the story of their development. Brand new principals often have to be taught the

entire process. Some have had experience with school improvement plans as assistant principals but others have not. Our most effective tactic with new principals is a one-on-one session covering why and how we do school improvement plans followed by assistance in interpreting the school's data and understanding strengths and weaknesses of the prior year's plan. In one or two sessions we can usually get a new principal ready to meet his/her staff and be knowledgeable about school improvement planning. Small group meetings work quite well for experienced principals.

The final problem involves changing tests or scoring procedures. At the end of each year everyone wants to know how they did compared to last year. Whenever a new test is introduced or parts of a test are made optional, that question cannot be answered. A very frustrating problem involves scoring changes. For example this year we have been officially notified that the scoring on the writing sample of the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills will be more stringent. As a result schools will have no idea what their results mean. This is frustrating but unavoidable.

Achievement Results

Student achievement was examined by comparing the earliest District-wide student test results for the five-year cycle by grade level with the 1982-83 test results and with the objectives set by the District. For the functional literacy goal area, student achievement was measured by the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) (grades 3, 5, and 9). The mathematics, reading, and basic language arts goals were assessed using the appropriate subtests of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

(ITBS) (grades 1-8) and Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) (grades 9-11). Due to the change from using the Metropolitan Readiness Tests at kindergarten to using the ITBS Level 5, no objectives were set for that grade for the 1982-83 school year.

The District's grade 3 TABS objectives were based on the 1981-82 test results, the first year that test was given. In mathematics the three lowest objectives were targeted. The two lowest were targeted in reading and the two lowest plus the actual writing sample (organization of ideas) were targeted in writing. In each instance the District objective was a 5% increase in the percent of students mastering each of the targeted objectives. Table 1 presents the grade 3 TABS results for 1980-81, 1981-82, and 1982-83, which are the three years in which the grade 3 TABS has been given. The District met all of its mathematics and reading objectives and two of the three writing objectives and one of two reading objectives. The overall result on the grade 3 TABS is positive both for the current year and for the 1981-83 comparison.

After the first administration of the grade 5 TABS in 1980, the District selected the three objectives in each area, mathematics, reading, and writing, that were mastered by the smallest percentages of District grade 5 students and declared them to be targeted objectives for school improvement planning. Each year the District's objective has been a 5% increase in the percent of grade 5 students mastering each of these nine targeted TABS objectives. For the 1982-83 school year a fourth objective, draw conclusions, was targeted in reading. Table 2 presents the grade 5 TABS results for 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983. This year the District achieved all of its objectives in mathematics and reading and

Table 1

Percentage of Grade 3 Students Mastering
Each TABS Objective, 1981, 1982, and 1983

	Objective	Year 3 1981	Year 4 1982	Year 5 1983	Difference Year 4 & Year 5	Difference Year 3 & Year 5
M	1. Read and write whole numbers	82	85	89	+ 4	+ 7
A	* 2. Order whole numbers	58	59	72	+ 13**	+ 14
T	3. Add whole numbers	83	89	92	+ 3	+ 9
H	* 4. Subtract whole numbers	69	73	79	+ 6**	+ 10
E	5. Solve word problems: +, -	76	84	89	+ 5	+ 13
M	6. Complete number patterns	77	83	83	0	+ 6
A	7. Multiply whole numbers	90	94	97	+ 3	+ 7
T	8. Identify fractional parts	84	88	91	+ 3	+ 7
I	9. Identify values of money	87	93	94	+ 1	+ 7
C	*10. Select units of measure	44	55	66	+ 11**	+ 22
S						
	* 1. Identify main idea	55	56	65	+ 9**	+ 10
R	2. Recall facts, details	67	79	85	+ 6	+ 18
E	* 3. Sequence events	70	69	75	+ 6**	+ 5
A	4. Follow written directions	89	95	96	+ 1	+ 7
D	5. Recognize words through phonic analysis	86	90	92	+ 2	+ 6
I						
N	6. Use context clues	78	83	88	+ 5	+ 10
G	7. Understand word structures	62	78	84	+ 6	+ 22
	8. Recognize words by sight	79	89	92	+ 3	+ 13
W	1. Spelling	92	95	95	0	+ 3
R	* 2. Punctuation	58	70	73	+ 3	+ 15
I	3. Capitalization	84	89	93	+ 4	+ 9
T	4. Correct English usage	72	76	87	+ 11	+ 15
I	* 5. Sentence structure	67	74	82	+ 8**	+ 15
N	* 6. Organization of ideas	85	67	93	+ 26**	+ 8
G	7. Handwriting (% acceptable)	98	96	99	+ 3	+ 1

*Targeted objective
**Met or exceeded the District's objective

Table 2

Percentage of Grade 5 Students Mastering
Each TABS Objective, 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983

		Objective	Year 2 1980	Year 3 1981	Year 4 1982	Year 5 1983	Difference Year 4 & Year 5	Difference Year 2 & Year 5
M	1.	Geometric terms, figures	46	64	63	73	+ 10	+ 27
A	* 2.	Interpret place value	36	33	54	65	+ 11**	+ 29
T	3.	Add whole numbers	78	85	86	93	+ 7	+ 15
H	4.	Subtract whole numbers	57	70	69	79	+ 10	+ 22
E	5.	Multiply whole numbers	50	61	68	77	+ 9	+ 27
M	6.	Divide whole numbers	51	60	64	72	+ 8	+ 21
A	7.	Solve word problems: +, -	61	82	78	78	0	+ 17
T	* 8	Solve word problems: x, /	38	45	47	55	+ 8**	+ 17
I	9.	Units of measure	76	83	82	84	+ 2	+ 8
C	10.	Interpret graphs	70	83	87	96	+ 9	+ 26
S	*11.	Identify equivalent fractions	35	40	51	65	+ 14**	+ 30
	12.	Sequence numbers	57	71	77	84	+ 7	+ 20
	1.	Identify main idea	38	48	45	58	+ 13**	+ 20
	2.	Recall facts, details	71	55	66	73	+ 7	+ 2
R	3.	Sequence events	51	62	65	71	+ 6	+ 20
E	* 4.	Distinguish fact, non-fact	21	47	53	61	+ 8**	+ 40
A	* 5.	Draw conclusions	49	45	52	71	+ 19**	+ 22
D	* 6.	Predict outcomes	40	51	52	61	+ 9**	+ 21
I	7.	Use context clues	77	85	88	93	+ 5	+ 16
N	8.	Use index	73	75	83	88	+ 5	+ 15
G	9.	Use maps, charts	65	68	79	84	+ 5	+ 19
	10.	Follow written directions	75	74	78	86	+ 8	+ 11
	11.	Identify character feelings	56	63	70	81	+ 11	+ 25
W	1.	Spelling	89	94	94	96	+ 2	+ 7
R	* 2.	Punctuation	48	58	57	71	+ 14**	+ 23
I	3.	Capitalization	76	86	85	91	+ 6	+ 15
T	* 4.	Correct English usage	48	55	60	64	+ 4	+ 16
I	5.	Sentence structure	72	77	78	86	+ 8	+ 14
N	6.	Commonly used forms	83	88	87	90	+ 3	+ 7
G	* 7.	Organization of ideas	85	75	64	95	+ 31**	+ 10
	8.	Handwriting (% acceptable)	91	98	96	98	+ 2	+ 7

*Targeted objective
**Met or exceeded the District's objective

two of the three objectives in writing. Looking at the difference between year 2 (1980) of the accreditation cycle and year 5 (1983), one sees a generally positive trend across all the grade 5 TABS objectives.

After the first administration of the grade 9 TABS in 1980, the District selected the four TABS mathematics objectives, three reading objectives, and three writing objectives that were mastered by the smallest percentages of students upon which to focus. These same TABS objectives were targeted during both the 1980-81 and 1981-82 school years. For the 1982-83 school year a fourth reading objective (identify main idea) was targeted. In each year the District's achievement objective has been a 5% increase over the previous year in the percent of students mastering each of these targeted TABS objectives. Table 3 contains the grade 9 TABS results for 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983. This year the District met two of its four mathematics objectives, all of its reading objectives and two of the three writing objectives. The attainment of 8 of the 11 TABS objectives at grade 9 is the best the District has done in meeting objectives in this five-year cycle. This is the first year that grade 9 students' performance on the TABS reading objectives showed consistent improvement. Overall, the performance of the District's ninth-grade students on the TABS mathematics, reading, and writing objectives has improved since 1980.

The District made progress on its functional literacy goal during the 1982-83 school year. Of the 29 TABS objectives targeted at grades 3, 5, and 9, the District achieved at least a 5% increase in the percent of students mastering on 24 of them. As is apparent from Tables 1, 2, and 3, the District has also generally improved its performance on non-targeted objectives of the TABS.

Table 3

Percentage of Grade 9 Students Mastering
Each TABS Objective, 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983

		Objective	Year 2 1980	Year 3 1981	Year 4 1982	Year 5 1983	Difference Year 4 & Year 5	Difference Year 2 & Year 5
M	1.	Add/subtract whole numbers	85	90	92	93	+ 1	+ 8
A	2.	Multiply/divide whole numbers	66	76	82	81	- 1	+ 15
T	* 3.	Solve problems: +, -, x, /	40	47	47	54	+ 7**	+ 14
H	* 4.	Use fractions/mixed nos: +, -, x	38	41	48	49	+ 1	+ 11
M	5.	Use decimals: +, -, x, /	59	60	68	71	+ 3	+ 12
A	* 6.	Solve personal finance problems	35	38	42	41	- 1	+ 6
I	7.	Solve problems using money	65	74	83	82	- 1	+ 17
C	8	Use measurement units	54	58	64	64	0	+ 10
S	* 9.	Use ratio/proportion/percent	38	39	37	49	+ 12**	+ 11
	10.	Read maps	65	70	78	80	+ 2	+ 15
	11.	Read, interpret charts, graphs	76	87	86	85	+ 1	+ 9
		Total Mathematics	49	55	61	64	+ 3	+ 15
	* 1.	Identify main idea	57	53	52	61	+ 9**	+ 4
	2.	Sequence events	57	58	60	69	+ 9	+ 12
R	3.	Perceive cause-effect	60	67	60	65	+ 5	+ 5
E	4.	Evaluate information	65	55	56	58	+ 2	- 7
A	* 5.	Distinguish fact, non-fact	44	49	50	59	+ 9**	+ 15
D	* 6.	Draw conclusions	49	55	59	67	+ 8**	+ 18
I	* 7.	Make generalizations	45	48	51	61	+ 10**	+ 16
N	8.	Follow written directions	87	84	85	86	+ 1	- 1
G	9.	Use parts of book	54	50	54	57	+ 3	+ 3
	10.	Use reference skills	76	76	73	80	+ 7	+ 4
	11	Use maps, charts	57	57	65	79	+ 14	+ 22
		Total Reading	53	53	56	65	+ 9	+ 12
W	1.	Spelling	78	77	81	79	- 2	+ 1
R	* 2.	Punctuation	55	60	70	75	+ 5**	+ 20
I	3.	Capitalization	62	81	83	87	+ 4	+ 25
T	* 4.	Correct English usage	51	52	55	58	+ 3	+ 7
I	5.	Sentence structure	71	72	71	78	+ 7	+ 7
N	6.	Commonly used forms	77	77	80	86	+ 6	+ 9
G	* 7.	Organization of ideas	35	77	65	90	+ 25**	+ 55
	8.	Handwriting (% acceptable)	88	94	90	97	+ 7	+ 9
		Total Writing	34	71	61	83	+ 22	+ 49

*Targeted objective
**Met or exceeded the District's objective

The District's objectives for the reading, mathematics, and basic language arts goal areas were to increase the percentage of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on national norms by 2% at each grade level 1-11. The ITBS was used at grades 1-8 and the TAP at grades 9-11. Table 12 presents the District-wide results. The reader should be aware that the 1978-79 ITBS scores were from the older version of the ITBS and were equated to the new version. At grades 9-11 the District used the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) in 1978-79 and changed in 1979-80 to the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP); these tests could not be equated. In light of the above, the reader should interpret the differences between the year 1 and year 5 scores with caution. In addition in 1982-83 the language arts subtest of the ITBS was optional rather than required in grades 1 and 2; it was a requirement in all other grades. The language arts subtest was given to 64% of students in grade 1 and 69% of students in grade 2. With the exception of grade 1 and 2 language arts, there are no problems in comparing the year 2 (1980), year 3 (1981), year 4 (1982), and year 5 (1983) scores since those years' tests were the same.

As Table 4 shows, the District's year 5 objective of a 2% gain in the percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile was met or exceeded in reading at all grades except 10, in mathematics at all grades, and in language arts at all grades. Comparing the results for year 1 with those for year 5 shows the District achieving its five-year objective of a 10% increase in the percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile (8% at grades 9-11) in reading at grades 1-6, in mathematics at grades 2-8, and in language arts at grades 1-10. In

Table 4

Percentage of Students Scoring at or above the 50th Percentile in Reading, Mathematics, and Basic Language Arts: 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983

Grade	Year 1 1979	Year 2 1980	Year 3 1981	Year 4 1982	Year 5 1983	Difference Year 4 & Year 5	Difference Year 1 & Year 5
Reading							
1	39%	41%	52%	51%	60%	+ 9**	+21
2	28%	36%	45%	47%	54%	+ 7**	+26
3	28%	31%	34%	37%	43%	+ 6**	+15
4	24%	30%	34%	36%	38%	+ 2**	+14
5	24%	26%	31%	34%	38%	+ 4**	+14
6	21%	28%	34%	37%	42%	+ 5**	+21
7	21%	22%	25%	28%	31%	+ 3**	+10
8	22%	25%	28%	29%	31%	+ 2**	+ 9
9	-[a]	25%	26%	25%	27%	+ 2**	+ 2[b]
10	-[a]	29%	29%	30%	31%	+ 1	+ 2[b]
11	-[a]	31%	31%	30%	33%	+ 3**	+ 2[b]
Mathematics							
1	56%	46%	56%	57%	65%	+ 8**	+ 9
2	41%	44%	52%	58%	66%	+ 8**	+25
3	31%	38%	46%	55%	63%	+ 8**	+32
4	29%	33%	37%	43%	51%	+ 8**	+22
5	24%	33%	39%	43%	52%	+ 9**	+28
6	23%	31%	37%	40%	48%	+ 8**	+25
7	21%	25%	28%	31%	36%	+ 5**	+15
8	23%	26%	28%	31%	35%	+ 4**	+12
9	-[a]	25%	27%	28%	30%	+ 2**	+ 5[b]
10	-[a]	25%	26%	26%	29%	+ 3**	+ 4[b]
11	-[a]	30%	29%	29%	33%	+ 4**	+ 3[b]
Language Arts							
1	-[c]	39%	51%	56%	65%[d]	+ 9**	+26[b]
2	-[c]	44%	52%	54%	60%[d]	+ 6**	+16[b]
3	45%	43%	54%	63%	73%	+10**	+28
4	35%	39%	47%	52%	59%	+ 7**	+24
5	31%	38%	46%	52%	61%	+ 9**	+30
6	27%	31%	40%	45%	53%	+ 8**	+26
7	22%	28%	32%	36%	42%	+ 6**	+20
8	22%	28%	32%	35%	41%	+ 6**	+19
9	-[a]	28%	30%	32%	38%	+ 6**	+10[b]
10	-[a]	32%	35%	36%	40%	+ 4**	+ 8[b]
11	-[a]	33%	33%	33%	38%	+ 5**	+ 5[b]

[a] ITED could not be equated to TAP
[b] No Year 1 data available; comparison is year 2 and year 5
[c] No equating study done
[d] Subtest optional
** Met or exceeded the District's objective

reading, over 50% of the students scored above the 50th percentile at grades 1 and 2, an increase of one grade over last year. In mathematics, over half the students scored that high in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, an increase of two grades over last year. In language arts, over 50% are now scoring at or above the 50th percentile at grades 1-6, an increase of one grade over the 1981-82 school year. While progress at the high school level has been limited, which is not surprising since it is more difficult to significantly affect the achievement of older, upper grade students who are often further behind than the younger students, it is clear that progress is finally being made at that level. The progress made over the past four years in the elementary and middle schools has begun to appear at the high school level.

In summary, the District registered gains on its norm-referenced achievement tests. The percent of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile in reading, mathematics, and language arts increased at every grade 1-11. Only the grade 10 reading objective of a 2% increase in the percent at or above the 50th percentile was not met; the other 33 objectives were met. The gains made over the five-year plan clearly indicate that the much heralded decline in student test scores in DISD has been reversed.